



Suffolk Riders



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Chairman's Update



Well another 4 weeks of lockdown has passed since the last newsletter. Apart from a 'Zoom' committee meeting I have had almost no motorcycle action with fellow members or machines in that time. I've ridden to work a few times but the last journey was a battle. Knowing it could be

the last ride for a while, I decided to take the country lanes from Ickleton, Saffron W, Ashden, Steeple Bumpstead, Clare, Melford, Cockfield, Beyton - home. I may as well have been on safari, dodging animals & birds of all sizes. I got home with only 1 pigeon sacrificed – a miracle. If you are out and about, especially around dusk, beware of the wildlife. The pigeon nearly had me off and I need to get my helmet examined....

I've been protected from the lockdown by having a topical task at work, but that has come to an end, as the Government withdrew support for our ventilator on Tuesday this week, – they are no longer required in the quantities once expected. Great news that many thousands of Covid-19 patients won't require forced breathing

How well are you working from home - it doesn't suit everyone. I'm seeing my daughter and mum regularly via technology. The internet and smartphones have made the whole situation far more bearable than it might have been.

Are members turning a non-essential journey into an essential bike ride? I have not ridden for fun since the restrictions - but then I have been able to ride legitimately. So it's very easy to become self righteous.

Whatever you're doing, I wish you well & keep yourselves and your loved ones safe and protect the NHS.

Cheers, Jon

Member's Forum

From Moto-Novice to Blood Bike Embolus (2017-20) - Nathan Clough

I'll level with you. I've only just come to love riding. It's always been a novelty, I mean why not, but it's a damn sight quicker to hop in a car, and perceptively safer on four wheels, and drier for that matter! The 8 September 2018 has a ring about it though... maybe it'll come to me later.

But what I can be sure of is the date 27 March 2017 – it's the day when I left off-grid life in a Dodge 50 Mk 1, hopping in



and out of fields, usually due west of Cambridge, for a cottage in Haverhill. Yes, I actually chose to move to Haverhill. I'd decided whilst I loved being an engineer (and that is still true today), I wanted to get back into community life, stop trying to be funky with life, volunteer and learn some new skills in the process. Becoming a Blood Biker with SERV Suffolk and Cambridgeshire was an obvious choice – I can't give blood having had a blood transfusion as a teenager, so this was an easy win. Bolster that with being a moto-medical and I've now got all the justification to get a licence!

With the theory test in Cambridge out the way, I started my CBT training on 19 May 2018 with [Camrider in Sawston](#). Having come from a background of riding 7-tonne Pekins diesels and [audaxing](#) on pushbikes with the levers in the 'wrong' place, this was quite some learning curve! But all was well, and I was out of the paddocks with a licence and a spanking new Tiger 800 XRT from Norfolk Triumph by the end of June. Now



the only thing to stop me from volunteering as a Blood Biker was an advanced riding qualification (and a loooong waiting list). Boring! There was the IAM, which looked splendid as I tick the box and job done. Or RoSPA, which looked way more credible, but high maintenance. What a faff: I've got my licence, let's go! The leaflets at Norfolk Triumph of local groups in that weird part of the world didn't look particularly interesting, so I put it on ice whilst looking for groups nearer to Haverhill (spoiler alert: there aren't any)!

Then [Ben Firbank](#) lured me in with a free tutored ride. In hindsight, without that I probably would've gone down the IAM route like every bloody Blood Biker I've met so far. But Ben is rather persuasive, the bait taken, I did. But first, only a few weeks from

passing my test I had a tour of Northern Europe to do on the Triumph, and a few thousand miles, albeit poshing it up in hotels as I went, I was back home. And so it came — my first ride-out on 8 September 2018. It has a ring about it. This was the date I began to re-learn riding all over again. And a tick-box exercise it ain't!

[John Morgan](#) was the chief, and we first met at the [Adventure Bike Shop in Acton](#) after he'd hunted me down in the electronics section. I wasn't cocky, nervous certainly, but still had the tick-box mentality in my head. Off we went; me riding to a perfect Mod 2 standard. And then came the realisation that I'll need to throw a fair chunk of DVLA stuff out the, errr, windshield, and swap it with proper roadcraft. Now, I like my rules out on the roads and struggle with the grey areas such as responding to danger. If I'm being tested, I like it black and white. John slowly got me to accept the grey area, and so long as I'm using the system and responding safely to the circumstances, and most importantly can justify the decisions being made, then we're in a good place. Actually, as I found out later, imho the test is rather subjective, but largely in my control. Those first 4 sessions were transformative, with a particular emphasis on cornering as that was my twitchy-bum moment. The coaching together with the group ride-outs continued for months, each ride resulting in some incremental improvements, some large, others being a couple of steps back. The support from the group however was prevalent, as it still is today, and having brutal feedback from those on my rear was always welcomed. I don't like complements — there's nothing I can do with them.

Medic training kicked off in late November 2018 with the [East of England Ambulance Service](#), and I started with [St John Ambulance](#) in February 2019. That side of the deal I made to myself in 2017 was going well.

Then another moment happened — 5 May 2019, when the legend David Halsall kindly came down to the Sealey factory in Bury St Edmunds to coach us on slow riding and emergency braking. I hadn't done this since Mod 1, and certainly not on my own bike. That transformed my city riding, overall balance, and confidence in the power of brakes beneath me. Then come the end of the month Tony Butler kindly took me out for a crosscheck after work, and subsequently recommended me for test pending some improvements.

Late June saw me pop up to the Peak District for EMT (*emergency medical technician*)—



training — it was my first test of a fully loaded bike with camping gear ahead of an on/off-road tour of Europe planned in July.

(To be continued: Nathan goes on holiday, has a RoSPA test, starts blood-biking & rides Folembury. Ed.)



MEMBER PROFILE – GRAHAM KAYLEY

Graham, a Lancashire lad from Accrington, now living in Redgrave with Helen, his wife, joined Suffolk Riders in 2015. After attending a Bike Safe Course and looking to build on that, he joined IAM and with the help of his observer, a certain Richard Tricker, passed the IAM advanced test in 2014.



Looking for a step up and knowing Richard was also a RoSPA tutor, Graham joined Suffolk Riders and with lots of help from Richard passed his RoSPA test with a gold standard ride.

Graham's Dad had been a motorcyclist prior to marriage and had owned numerous bikes and if Graham's memory serves him right included a Vincent Black Shadow. Dad's army



national service was with the Signal Corps as a despatch rider where he had been part of the White Helmet Display Team. So no surprise that in 1971 at seventeen

Graham purchased a [Honda CD175 twin](#). This was followed by a [Honda CB350](#).

Graham joined the Army in 1975 serving in the Corps of Royal Engineers, his initial posting was to Germany. A [Honda CB550/4](#) followed in 1979 on his return to the UK, after which saw him take a break in motorcycling, until 1995 and the purchase of a Triumph oil in the frame [TR6C](#). With his move to Redgrave in 1997 a [Triumph \(Hinckley\) Thunderbird Sport 900](#) was added to his garage. Then a swap to a Honda pre V-Tech 800 VFR, then onto a [Triumph Speedmaster](#) and another Triumph followed, a [Tiger 800](#), then needless to say a GS1200. In 2019 the GS was replaced with a [BMW R1200R Sport](#).

Q & A

Q: What brought you to Suffolk Riders?

A: The fact that Richard Tricker would be my Tutor and I was looking for the next step up after the IAM test.

Q: What do you think you have gained from RoSPA?

A: Enhanced skills and more enjoyment in my riding.

Q: What's your favourite bike?

A: My current BMW R1200R Sport.

Q: What's your favourite ride?

A: Hard choice. Between the Grossglockner Pass and Northern Spain, probably the Picos mountains.

Q: Favourite food/drink?

A: Steak and ale pie with either a pint of real ale or a nice glass of red wine.

Q: Favourite music?

A: I was a big fan of Tamola Motown in my younger days.

Q: Must do?

A: Ride as much as possible while I can.

Thanks Graham.

Keith Gilbert

TUTORING – Keith Gilbert

Picking up on Stephen Worrall's 'Life as a Tutor' in [Issue 8](#), I could not agree more with Stephen. Taking on the role of a Tutor is undoubtedly when you really learn Roadcraft, as you now have to explain this to your associate. My own tutor training was nowhere as comprehensive as that offered by Suffolk Riders today.

It was 1981 and I was a member of the newly formed ESSEX ADVANCED MOTORCYCLISTS I.A.M. group. My training consisted of a ride from Chelmsford to Rayleigh with a couple of stops.

While en route to a Road Safety Day organised by Essex Police, EAMG were asked to put on what we now call 'try out' rides. Other than being told not to be too kind and mark them out of 10 on the system: suddenly, I was now an IAM observer! The Roadcraft manual in 1981 was a small blue book mostly words with a few diagrams and very seldom used in training.

So my observing/tutoring was, and still is, what I took on board from the two traffic officers who were responsible for the formation of EAMG, which is:

- An advanced motorcyclist is expecting to stop but planning to go.
- Use the space behind you.
- Riding plan – what you can see, what you can't see and what you could reasonably expect to happen next.
- An overtake is either on or off. If you have to think twice about it stay where you are.
- Is it safe, is it legal, is it necessary?
- Never make yourself the meat in a sandwich.

- Every road sign warrants a mirror check.
- Never take your eye off the ball.
- An indicator only proves the bulb works.
- Speed is not dangerous, only in appropriate speed is.
- The only two things you are in control of when riding – position and speed.
- Space buys you time.
- A motorcycle goes where you look.
- The throttle works **two** ways.
- The System works if applied properly.
- Never overtake across a junction.
- Make use of observation links.
- AND DON'T BE TOO KIND.

To prospective and new tutors, you will develop your own style, i.e. what you will be saying to your first associate will no doubt be a lot different by the time you get to your 10th one.

The following 'tip' came from an IAM observer in my early days of observing.

On your first ride as a tutor with your first associate, remember he will be as nervous as you so get him on the move asap. **DON'T TELL HIM TO LOOK FOR YOUR INDICATORS OR FOLLOW YOUR INITIAL DIRECTIONS**, just ask him if he knows his way to a place of his choice and you will follow him. This removes a lot of his/her anxiety of either having to look for your indicators or remembering your directions and you will probably benefit in seeing him settle into his own rhythm. My dad used to say 'boy, you can learn something from everyone'.

THE GOOD OLD DAYS (or were they)? - Keith Gilbert

Having just taken advantage of our lockdown situation to wash and proof my Rukka suit, how things have moved on from my first purchase of a Barbour Black Streak



rubberised motorcycle suit. This was second-hand from a friend of my dad's. It neither kept me warm nor dry. What, body armour!! No

chance of that in 1959. How I longed for a wax cotton Trialmaster suit, but that had to wait. So with my pilot's gauntlets, cap and welly boots I was off.

The compulsory wearing of a crash-helmet came in February 1973. I was 13 years in advance of that, replacing my cap with an Aviakit skid lid to keep my ears warm. As an apprentice, at 18 I was allowed to work weekend overtime so it was not long before the Hunter boots, along with white fisherman's socks and Trialmaster suit were

purchased and with an Aviakit Trackstar helmet I was made up. Just needed to get a bigger bike.

A 1956 BSA 650cc Gold Flash was purchased from Pride

and Clarke, part exchanging my Francis Barnett in 1960. I soon set about tuning it with alloy mudguards, Vincent straight bars and Burgess silencers. Not the most reliable motorcycle but in those 'good old days' having the head-gasket blow, chain break or electrics fail was something you fixed yourself.

We went everywhere on the BSA. Parties, pictures, jazz clubs, motorcycle meetings at Brands, Silverstone and Snetterton, sprints at Duxford and Debden. When I say 'we', Maureen



has been riding pillion since 1959 and that's why she's the best map reading pillion around (2017 saw us purchase our first GPS).

Our Sunday rides to meetings at Brands usually saw us going via the Woolwich free ferry or the Blackwall Tunnel and if we had enough money left on leaving Brands we would treat ourselves to returning via the country route and Tilbury Ferry. I recollect it being about two bob for us and the bike single (NO DARTFORD CROSSING IN THE GOOD OLD DAYS). £4/adult one way - no bikes! Ed.

Editor's note: Keith sent in a number of photographs to be used with this article. While matching images to text one stood out as not fitting in the timeline. I phoned Keith to ask about the photo and so began a fascinating story following on from the BSA Gold Flash. Always on the lookout for a good piece, I've asked Keith to update this article by a few more years. I'm sure those of a certain vintage will enjoy.





Belstaff Trialmaster

wax cotton suit -
still in production.

Fisherman's white
socks (just the right
amount showing).

Keith and Maureen
+ BSA Gold Flash



Copied from a Motorcycle Mechanics advert.



Note the prices!

Nod Off! By Bakson

I'm more or less minding my own business, riding down one of Suffolk's back roads, making a bit of progress. Hazards everywhere. I see a mobile hazard approaching but it's a bike and as long as I keep out of his way if he cuts a corner I will be OK. Suddenly, alarm bells ring. The idiot is nodding like a toy dog on the rear parcel shelf of a car. Why?

On a different road, much further on, an SUV with a nice looking lady flashes her lights at me and since I haven't done anything untoward and I don't know her I assume there is a hazard ahead and sure enough there is a speed trap. Thank you, unknown lady, for being a helpful motorist ... perhaps she is a biker herself. The point of this is that signals from other road users can be very helpful, but nods from motorcyclists? Eh?

I go to a motorcycle rally or show: do I nod

at everyone there? No. And do they nod at me? No. There's just too many of them and I'd finish up with a stiff neck as well as running the risk that people would think I was a bit weird. But some bikers nod at me on the road. WHY??

Does he (let's call the rider a 'he') know me? No, so he's not saying the equivalent of "G'day, mate". Is he saying "Hi" to my bike? I hope not as it's just an inanimate lump of metal and plastic so he won't get an intelligent reply. Is he trying to attract my attention like the lady in the SUV? If so I would have thought that something positive would have been more effective.

Perhaps he is acknowledging me. Huh? For what? Or he wants me to acknowledge him. Why should I and why would he want it? Does his nod tell me that I have to do something not related to making safe progress? No, he probably doesn't understand that concept. Anyway, acknowledgment has, like respect, to be earned and a five-second encounter doesn't give time for that. If he encountered all 1.1 million registered motorcycles in the UK at once,

would he acknowledge each and everyone? Actually, he probably would. Oh, dear.

Should my head-wobbling-look-at-me-I'm-nodding-at-you biker happen to read this please take home this message: I have more important matters to attend to than to check if you are nodding, make a decision to nod back and then do so before our paths meet head on because you were so busy looking at me that you weren't looking where you were going. Keep your nods to yourself. Or, in brief, nod off.

A trip to Australia during 4-18 August 2012 - Mike Anthony

It's Thursday morning, 9th August, and warm. Last night's neighbour was an old boy on a 1200 Kwaka. on his way to Tassie for a job, dressed in a leather jacket, jeans and work boots. Hard these Aussie bikers! (You can see their route for the day [here](#), Ed.) We headed east along the Grafton Road, then turned northwards on the Armidale Road. Initially open moorland but later deep forest – and lots of roadworks. Leaving the forest we saw a red steam engine parked by the



roadside, outside of The [Coaching Station Inn at Nymboida](#) which is owned by the Aussie actor, [Russell Crowe](#). He has 'The Museum of Interesting Things' with Hollywood memorabilia, some motorcycles, a Roman chariot complete with a pair of stuffed horses, a [Leviathan Stagecoach](#) and many realistic mannequins. Continuing north easterly we arrived at Grafton, but quickly moved on, heading to Yamba, finally ending the day there with 263km on the clock. We stayed at The Pacific Hotel overlooking the beach in this is a small seaside town, full of holiday homes judging from the number that were for sale. I took a run south to check out

[Angourie](#) and the surfer beaches there, but it was pretty calm. That evening we were the only diners at the Indian restaurant.

Friday 10 August (You can follow their route for the day [here](#), Ed). We head inland again following the Clarence River to MacLean, the tartan capital of Australia: [all the lamp posts are decorated with tartan](#)! (NB hit cancel. Ed.) A little further along the



river, past the sugar cane fields, we came upon the ferry to Lawrence. It's free! Passing through the



village we travelled along Pringle way, the Summerfield way then back to Casino and taking

the Bruxner highway east to Lismore. The final 15km south east to the farm of my father's cousin.

Robert was born circa 1932, when we met him he was in his third career. Originally in South Africa as a lawyer, a farmer and for 17 years an airforce pilot. At 44 he emigrated to where they now live and started all over again as a farmer: growing avocados for first 12 years then switching to macadamia nuts. He took us to the factory premises where the nuts are received from surrounding farms, cracked, the kernels extracted, screened, sized and packaged.



Robert and Merle have had a fascinating life and his tales of life in South Africa were music to the ears of Robin who spent 20 years of his life there. For my part I was delighted to hear stories about my father when he was in the navy during and after WWII. It appears he was a shipmate of Prince Phillip on HMS Vanguard during the 1948 royal tour as ship's doctor. We spent the night as guests at the farm and drove around the estate in the morning.



The photos taken, we set off again northwards.

The guide book said, "visit Byron Bay" so off we went by way of Alstonville and the outskirts of Ballina, Lennox Head and up the coastal highway to the lighthouse at [Byron Bay](#). The view was

impressive but the wind was a little chilly. We wondered how the scantily clad Aussie



ladies coped with the wind chill: us hardy bikers being glad of full motorcycle gear. We rode north, initially



on the highway before cutting back to the seaside at Pottsville; ending up right on the beach at Tweed Heads. At midday we found an active pub with many Harleys parked outside, plus the usual crowd decorated with tattoos and frill-draped leather jackets. Of course we joined them for beer and free sausages. To the north we could see the high-rise buildings of the Gold Coast. We crawled through the traffic and the many lights of seaside suburbia area until Clagiraba, before retracing our steps a little going westwards until turning off onto the winding Beaudesert–Nerang road to [Beaudesert](#). The place was dead. In the motel the receptionist said the town should be called Slowdesert! That night we ate 'spiceless' Chinese, the Aussiefied owner explaining that he served the food that way to cope with local tastes. 🇦🇺

To be continued: next month Mike and Robin visit a motorcycle museum with old and 'new' Vincents; the dam providing the water for Brisbane, a turtle sanctuary and go whale watching. Ed.

The Last Laugh Word

Once again my thanks go to our contributors, the new and the regular. It's stating the obvious that without them, the publication wouldn't exist. So what are you doing during the lockdown? Care to share it with us? Keep the newsletter going. Do you have a question you'd like answering, something on Roadcraft even? Whatever, you know were to send any contribution.

For the first couple of weeks of the lockdown, I would walk past my new bike in the garage and would spot a blemish that would quickly require a slight rub with a cloth, but I've got over that now (my daughter says I'm OCD - she's probably right) and now just make sure the trickle charger is working OK. Mind you, as a convert to Garmin (my dislike of TomTom is for all to see in Issue 2), I've just updated my satnav to the zūmo XT, and installed the new mount. I've played with it and my helmet in the office; it is a bit quirky, but it is growing on me: I might write something up for next month.

Let me ask you a question are you a nodder? I'm referring to Bakson's article on page 7. When I returned to biking a few years back I quickly learned that there was a new etiquette that did not exist in my younger days, and I quickly took it up. My reasons are pretty much the same as described in this [post](#). So, do you have an opinion you are willing to share?

A mechanic was removing a cylinder-head from the motor of a Harley motorcycle when he spotted a well known cardiologist in his shop. The cardiologist was there waiting for the service manager to come and take look at his bike when the mechanic shouted across the garage "Hey Doc, wan to take a look at this?" The cardiologist, a bit surprised, walked over to where the mechanic was working on the motorcycle. The mechanic straightened up, wiped his hands on a rag and said, "So Doc, look at this engine. I open its heart, take the valves out, repair any damage, and then put them back in, and when I finish, it works just like new.

So how come I make a pretty small salary and you get the really big money when you and I are doing basically the same work?" The cardiologist paused, smiled and leaned over, then whispered to the mechanic..... "Try doing it with the engine running." (*OK, I know they can stop the heart to work on it, but it made me smile. Ed.*)

